

## New Tree Tenders for Harrisburg

June 2021

Throughout May, 36 area residents participated in training to become “Tree Tenders.” The course was offered through the state TreeVitalize Program, with funds from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and support from the City Forester and the Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department. It prepares volunteers to help the City to plant and care for young trees, and to organize community planting events. It includes sessions on the benefits trees provide, basic tree biology, tree identification, tree selection and planting, tree care and pruning, and the steps to successfully organize a large planting.

The care a tree receives in the first few years after it is planted is critical to its long term survival and health. Tree Tenders can play an essential role in ensuring that young trees survive competition from grass and weeds, and are protected from damage from lawn mowers, weed whackers, and rodents. Through early pruning of young trees, Tree Tenders can help ensure that trees develop good form and structure into maturity.

On Saturday, June 12, a Tree Tenders “work party” was held to weed and mulch trees that were planted throughout Reservoir Park in 2020. On July 10 another event will be held to do light structural pruning of street trees planted in 2018. In the coming years, the vision is to engage Tree Tenders in planting new street trees throughout the city each spring and fall.

Plans are already underway now for fall 2021, when 50 or more new street trees are to be planted. Tree Tenders will be actively seeking city blocks where at least ten neighbors would like to have new street trees. If you are interested in helping at a Tree Tender work party, or are willing to talk to neighbors to help get new trees into your own neighborhood, please contact the City Forester at [earoane@harrisburgpa.gov](mailto:earoane@harrisburgpa.gov) or call (717) 255-3003.



Tree Tenders learn to use to dichotomous key to identify trees





Gain hands-on experience pruning young trees for structure and form



And help weed and mulch young trees to keep them healthy